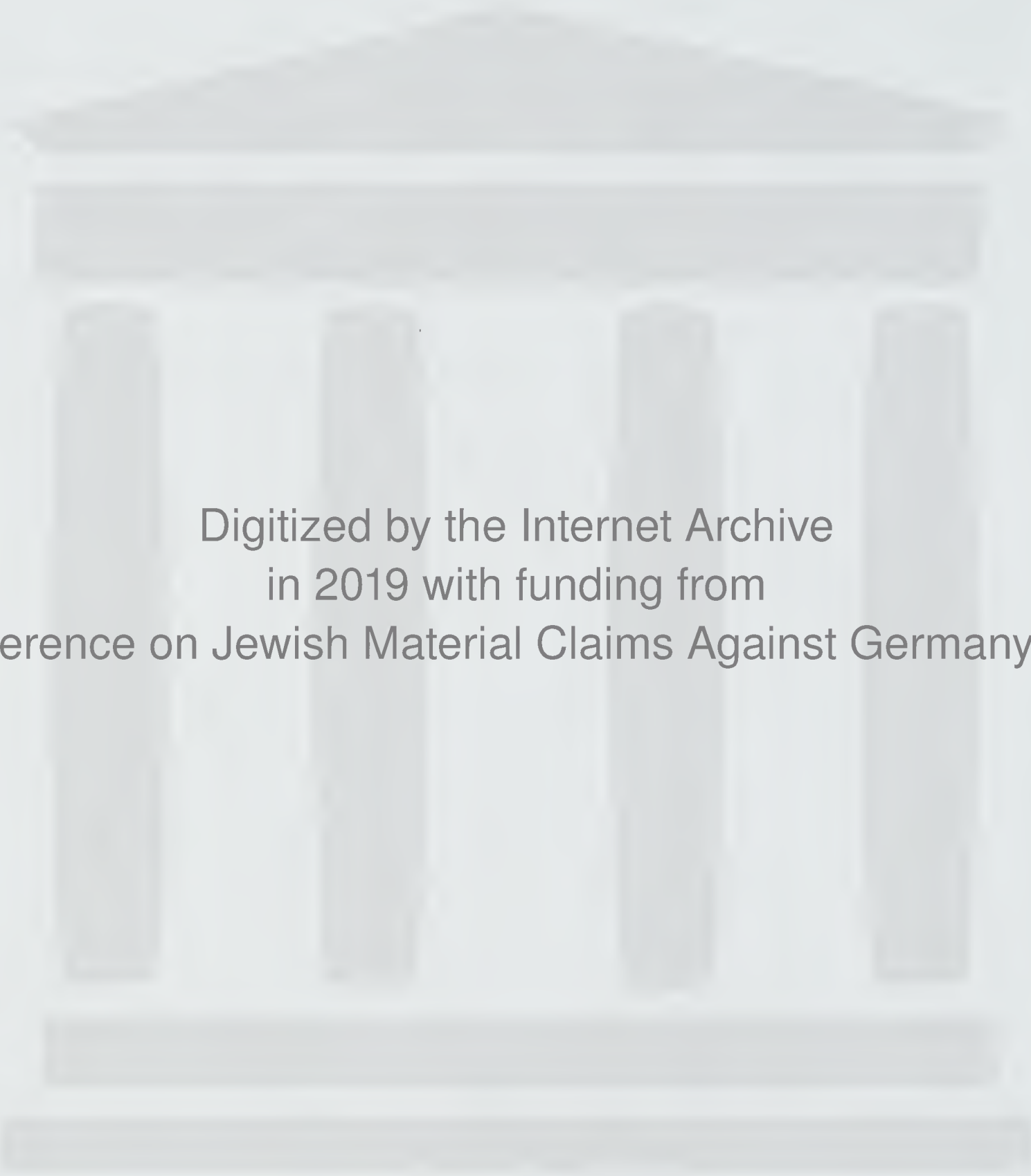


ועידת התביעות  
Claims Conference  
Conference on Jewish Material Claims  
Against Germany

## **Claims Conference Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection**

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**Guten Morgen Herr Krüger**

***Recollections of the childhood***

**of**

**Abraham , Adolf , Ali Grossmann**

**( The Enfant Terrible )**

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2004



**In Memory of my Mother and my sister Zilli !**

who were sent on the 26th. of September 1942 with Transport No : 11/ 1119

**to Auschwitz / Birkenau .**

both, innocent of any crime , murdered by the officers of State of a

legitimate Government !.



### *Guten Morgen Herr Krüger !*

It was early in the morning on September the 3rd when my mother went into labor .It was a cold autumn day and the sun , despite its desperate efforts to throw its rays upon the earth , could not penetrate the low clouds. It was a grey and gloomy day, predicting the coming of a storm and showers of rain .

Our dimly lit house was humming with activity,.The buxom midwife was giving orders to the many women who were present There were friends and neighbors who came to help and advise at the birth of my my mother`s 4th child . They all crowded around her bed preventing the midwife from doing her job ..

In an exasperated voice she shouted loudly , ordering all woman to go to the adjacent room and to wait in patience for the birth of my sister .

Our maid discerning the concern on my worried face , held my hand and from time to time stroked my head , reassuring me , that the stork would be coming shortly to bring me a little sister .

Suddenly I heard the groans and the cries of pain from my mother and my heart ran cold and then the sounds, what seemed like the bleating of a sheep . It was the cries and the whimpering of my sister The stork had arrived !. I only wondered how he could have made his way through the chimney and his way back again to the roof , without getting black soot on his feathers .

The midwife thrust her head through the open door and with composure and equanimity gave orders to the woman to boil water, to bring cotton-wool, clean towels and to prepare some disinfected yarn.. Everybody got busy .and soon the baby, wrapped in towels was displayed with aplomb to all the woman who had assembled in our house , to be present at the delivery of my mother . . . .

Lekach and Bronfen ( Spongecake and Schnaps ) was brought in and soon the house was filled with friends and neighbors , shouting Mazel Tov , Mazel Tov and bursting into singing at the top of their voices : Letaher Libenu , Letaher Libenu Leovdechu, Leovdechu , Beemmes . Many of the Gentile friends of my father joined in the singing , having been acquainted with this song on previous occasions and on having been present at the birth of his 3 sons, at their cicumcisions and their Bar. Mitzvas ..

Exactly 10 years later on the same date , Germany invaded Poland and unleashed the 2nd World War, leaving in its wake millions of dead and most of Europe in ruin . They destroyed every single Jewish community, murdering over 6 million Jews and amongst them one and a half . million children , and amongst those children my little sister Zilly , who was



wrote delightfull and fascinating stories in Plattdeutsch , all of which I read with the ardent fervour of a bookworm ..

There were 2 cinemas in town and on the Sunday afternoons , all of us 3 brothers went to the 10 Pfennig show . In the beginning there were silent films and later with the developement of the film industry we were honored with Tonfilm ( Films with sound ) The voices were scratchy , but that not diminish our enthusiasm for Tom.Mix , the dog Rin Tin Tin, and .Pat and Patachon We made the acquaintance on the screen with Hans Albers , the comedian Heinz Rühmann . Greta Garbo , Marlene Dietrich , Shirley Temple ,Charly Chaplin Harry Piel , Dick und Dof ( Laurel and Hardy ) Gustav Fröhlich ,. Anni Ondra , and last but not least , the Jewish actor Siegfried Arno .Siegfried played the main role in a film called: "Um eine Nasenlänge ".( The length of his nose ) Siegfried took part in a bicycle race and he won the race by passing the rope by the length of his long Jewish Schnossel ..

In the excitement, watching the films , I devoured all 3 tickets and when the attendant came to check them, they were only to be found in my stomach " Raus, Raus Lausbuben" he yelled Get out of here, you rascals ! For many years I suffered from the recriminations of my 2 brothers for having eaten those tickets .

In the spring the farmers and their workers brought their cows to the large and expansive meadows to graze and to be milked .They sat on their one legged stools aiming the foaming warm milk straight from the udders of the cow into our outstretched beakers ,or into our open mouths The weather was glorious the fields green all covered with with red , yellow and white flowers The smells of the grass , the flowers and the manure of the cows stimulated our appetite and on arriving home, we all devoured half a horse ...

In the winter the city flooded those meadows , which soon turned into ice, for everybody to skate upon .I was a skating champion , showing off to everybody present .all the tricks of the trade At times the ice broke and some boys fell into the icy waters An attending ambulance with 2 paramedics ,with a stretcher , made with a canvas cover and two big wheels ,rushed the unfortunate victims to the local hospital ..

In late summer there was a circus .On a 10 meter high tightrope , men and woman performed the most daring tricks .They rode on bicycles , made somersaults or stood on their heads on the rope .I always wished in my heart to be part of those performers Fat Anni with a huge mountainous bosom ,sat on a stage inviting everybody to enter the tent to look at the wonders of the world , like little dwarfs ,a man eating fire and a strong man bending iron bars .There was a troupe of Russian Cossacks who came straight from the steppes of Mother Russia .They were dressed in smocks which had pockets for bullets, overflowing pants and they wore soft leather boots without heels . With terrifying speed they gyrated on their galloping small horses from the backs to their stomachs , without losing their balance , while standing freehanded on their back and , at the same time yelling with loud voices "Urah ,Veperiod Davai " ! Oh , to be a Cossak . what more could any one want





Gypsies with gayly bedecked horses and loaded wagons came to the town . Pots and pans , ribbons and colored cloths hung from the sides of the wagons .A man with countless children walked alongside playing the fiddle The melodies he played , were sad and melancholic, the harbinger of suffering and of mourning .All of them had oily black hair, swarthy skins and were dressed in colorful garments .The woman in our street, hurriedly gathered all their children and locked the doors , fearing that the Gypsies might abduct them. .The Gypsies meant and did no harm , happily living their lives in their own fashion , not knowing what was in store for them and that their fate would be the same as that of the Jews .

At harvest time , workers , men , woman and children came from Poland to work on the farms which were close to our town The most important crop was the Asparagus, endemic to our region .One of the woman who came, was Marie who worked for us as a maid and remained within our household since I can remember .She was never without an apron or a kerchief which covered her hair , which she always smeared with butter. The wages she got, she kept in a knotted handkerchief and she never spent one single Pfennig on herself Marie knew no other language but Polish , but I never heard her utter a single word . We knew nothing about her , where in Poland she came from ,or anything her family She was an enigma .She sat in the corner of the kitchen eating her meals in absolute silence , rosycheeked and uncomplaining For many years she remained with us serving our family industriously and faithfully .

In the evenings after work, all the workers met at the firestation opposite our house , They talked in loud tones .creating a terrific din , drinking beer and Slivovitz singing nostalgic Polish songs, to the chagrin and the annoyance of all the Burgers .Two woman quarrelled about a man , shouting and cursing each other; " **Shakref Paronia** , kurve ,you whore " she yelled . The other woman not wanting to be left behind , lifted her skirts and pulling down her large woolen panties, revealing tremendous white buttocks, yelled : " **Salmi Dubbi " ( Kiss my Arse )"**

I stood there with my mother looking at this outlandish spectacle both of us splitting our sides and slapping our knees in mirth . .

Once a year there was a fair and at the same time "Schützenfest ". ( Sharpshooting Festival ) A competition in sharpshooting took place.and the winner in this event was crowned " Der Schützenkönig " The King of the Sharpshooters . All members dressed in Tyrolean uniforms, with the incumbent king who had a plaque on his chest , marched through the streets of the town accompanied by a brass band Chingderassa Bum , Chingderassa Bum ,Chingderassa .Bum Bum .Bum !

" Haut den Lukas" was a popular pastime . With a sledgehammer one had to beat on a peg which rose to the top where a bell was attached .People used to watch with admiration as my brother Jakob without any problem got the bell to ring with one powerful pound of the sledge hammer ..





I loved the sweet burned almonds and the peppermint , which were made by the peppermintmaker ,swinging the ingredients on a hook with a bell , to and fro, luring the people to buy the freshly made peppermint bars .All the family went to the fair and we always came home with a teddybear or some other prize, won at one of the booth .My father opened a stall selling the boots he manufactured and it never took him a long time to sell all his ware .They were well known in the neighborhood , were of excellent quality and very popular .

Opposite from our house there lived a man who had a parrot who could speak .A dark passageway led to his dark and damp apartment .We children used to play there Hide and Seek and everytime we passed his apartment that arseholed bird used to yell , " Who goes there, who goes there." giving our secret away..I ran errands for him and he always gave me a few Pfennig which he took out of a dirty bag .At times he also gave me some awful sticky candy , which I invariably threw away. His apartment looked like a pigsty and smelled like the pest .His sparse hair was long , hanging down from his 2 temples and on his face a three week unshaven beard . His eyes were red and filled with tears, the smell from his almost toothless mouth , despite the peppermint candies I bought for him , was overpowering exacerbated by the remnants of his foul and broken teeth .When he spoke to me in his thunderous voice , his spittle covered my whole face Wiping it away with my elbow , I left the spooky apartment , spitting 3 times over my left shoulder .

One Sunday morning a troupe of soldiers with horses and wagons bivouacked in our street .They set up a field kitchen and sold goulash to all the inhabitants .10 Pfennig a generous ladle, in containers the people brought with them This was to prove the solidarity between the people and the Wehrmacht. One of the soldiers gave me the task of holding his horse .I held the horse by the holster.and every time the horse neighed , it raised its head lifting me up in the air and putting me down again .A sack with oats was tied around the horses neck and a pail of water at its feet .The horse drained the whole bucket in three draws and then like the flood urinated onto my new boots .And if that was not enough ,it lifted its tail and dropped a heap of steaming stinking horseapples right next to me and then , to top it all off , let go a crescendo of long farts which had the smell of sour beer .Another troupe of soldiers came collecting clothes ,furniture and sundries for needy people , calling it : "Winterhilfe " ( Winter help )

At the very end of our street, there lived a man by the name of Engel .He was the owner of a company which made fences ,fences made of wooden boards and fences made of wire .He was small of stature but had a great hatred for the Jews . Heaven only knows , why he did not like the Jews .It certainly was not , that he feared competition , for there was no Jew who dealt in the same trade as he did. He had a big Alsatian dog , and every afternoon he walked past the houses of the Jews in our street and when he said the word " Saujud" (Jewpig ) his dog pulled and strained against the leash, fletching his teeth wanting to tear all the Jews to pieces .Then one fine day Engel passed away, thanks to the good Lord ,and all



the Jews said the Mischeberach , ( A prayer of thanks ) for the deliverance from this evil and malicious man .His croonies, with whom he served in the first World War congregated in front of his house and as the coffin was carried out , a band played in subdued tones the famous veteran song : " Ich hatt einen Kameraden , einen besseren findst du nicht " . ( I had a comrade , there never was a better one ) I was standing amongst the crowd , joining the band singing : Ich hat einen Kameraden ein bessers Arschloch findst du nicht . ( There was never a better Arshole )

Another neighbor raised pigs in his cellar and the smell and the grunting of the animals permeated half the street. .Also he used to pass the Jewish houses yelling : " You dirty Jews you stink like pigs , go to Palestine , Moses is waiting for you there ! .We don't need rubbish like you Jews "!

There was also a pub ( Bierkeller ) not far from us on the opposite side of the street and the noise emanating from there every night was earsplitting ..A lot of customers patronised the establishment till late into the night ,.making it at times difficult to fall asleep.

The customers quarrelled in high tones and at times got into arguments, which resulted in brawls , fracas and exchange of blows Very often I witnessed as two burly men threw a rowdy drunk customer onto the street .One of the men held the drunk by his shoulders , while the second by his legs , crying in unison : " Hoh, Ruck . Hoh, Ruck Eins , Zwei , Drei , and threw him onto the street, where he landed with a sickening thud with his head first. on the cobblestones. The two men wiped their hands on their trousers, and without looking back reentered the pub to continue their drinking .The police arrived and dragged the drunk to the station , where he slept off his stupor .The next night he was back again as if nothing had occurred ,being on the best of terms with the two " Chuckers Out"

Voluptuous waitresses , carrying loaded trays with foaming jugs of beer , wound their way through the crowded , hazy saloon , serving the customers There was a stench of beer , porkgrease, and of urine permeating the whole saloon A huge cloud , caused by cigars and cigarette smoke made it difficult to find ones way ,while the din caused by the people, made conversation difficult .

At times I used to go into the bar and play the slotmachine .It had a perforated top and by punching a small iron bar into one of those holes ,a little colored ball was released and rolled into a receptible . A ball with the color of gold was the ultimate prize a big box of cheap chocolates, a silver ball a smaller box of chocolates , a red one some other trifle , yellow, something of nothing and a black ball nothing at all ..My mother disapproved of my visits to this den and forbade me ever to go there again ." A Jewish child does not go to a " Kneipe" ( Pub ) ! But when I brought her the pralines , she said : "My son , one day will be a great soicher " ( Businessman ).

It was on a Friday evening , Erev Shabat and all the family sat around the table My father had just finished intoning the blessings over a goblet of wine and we were about to





commence the meal , when we suddenly heard a great and thunderous slam .All of us got up and rushed to the outside ,to see what had caused the noise A drunk was standing in front of our door and shouted : " The Jews, the dirty Jews are profiteers, they rob and steal from us .A big wooden log lay inside our shopwindow and fragments of broken glass were scattered all over the pavement .Under his arms he held some of the wares which he had taken from the shopwindow .

My father, who was two heads shorter than him , gave him an uppercut with his clenched fist , which knocked him out cold .He lay unconcious on the pavement , when the police arrived .It seemed , that the innkeeper refused to serve him anymore drinks as he had run out of money That of course was the fault of those dirty Pig-Jews.The police took protocol and my mother poured them Bronfen ( Schnaps ) Then they took him by the scruff of the neck and dragged him to the Police station .The next day the police came again and accused my father of assault and battery .My mother was so outraged by this , that she spat on the floor , exclaiming : " Phui, " Shame on you " One of the policemen took her by the shoulder and started to push her In a rage my father got hold of the policeman and tore his shirt .Handcuffed, they took him to the station .

That very day, my mother being a Polish citizen , contacted the Polish consulate which had its seat in Berlin ,asking for assistance .Two days later, a representative arrived . He was a tall and lanky man and had Slavic features The collar of his shirt was much too big for his sinewy, skrewy neck and he had a pronounced Adamsapple .With scorn in his Polish voice , he told my mother cynically to get a certificate from a doctor , that she was suffering from bronchitis and therefore needed to spit at times ." It is always the Jews who cause all the trouble " was clearly to be discerned by his demeanor. He promised, to do all in his power to have my father released as soon as possible .

When I told my mother of his hostile stance , she , being all her life conditioned to anti .Semetism said to me in Yiddisch : " lech hob den Pollack tief in maan Tuches !" . ( I have this Pollack deep in my rear ). "

My father was released two weeks later, not looking any worse for wear .While incarcerated , he played the card game 66 with his buddy Police Detective Wagner Wagner was in the habit to visit our home and enjoy a glass of homemade Bronfen , which was the speciality of my father They .were friends for many years . Like my mother , he was a very proud person and held all anti -Semites in disdain. .

### **My Father !**

The name of my father was Benjamin the son of Mendel , but in Germany everybody called him Bernhardt . He was born in 1893 in Warsaw Poland and all his family lived in Nalevka Street. His father Mendel was a glazier, and there were a number of siblings of whom I only met one ,by the name of Max .I do not know how many there were and of what



gender They lived under dire circumstances ,like most of the Polish Jews ,eking out a miserable existence He never went to school ,because his parents could not afford to give their numerous children an education , but all the boys attended Cheder ( religious school ) where they learned to read and to write in ancient Hebrew , for the purpose of reading the prayerbook the pentateuch and the scriptures .

He learned to be a shaftmaker, the uppers of jackboots and this he started at an early age One day , his father came home, bruised and bloody ,and all the window panes which he carried with him on his back broken .A Pole ,who did not like the Jews had beaten him and had smashed all the glass .

My father left his sewing machine , found the miscreant and beat him to pulp , leaving him lying unconcious in the middle of the street .Fearing retribution from the authorities, he packed his sparse belongings and took leave of his parents and his family. .

That very night he crossed the border and entered Germany It was 1918 , just after the end of the 1st World -War.and he chose to live in the town of Güstrow . There, in this small provincial town lived Gustav Kon , who had married the sister of my father`s brother`Max`s wife Gustav had served in the Russian army , was taken prisoner and incarcerated in a prison camp, which was located close to the town .After his release , he did not return to Poland ,but remained in the small town and opened a store and a pawnshop. It did not take him a long time to prosper .This was my father`s main reason tor his choice .to settle in this town With a rucksack and a couple of suitcases , he traversed all the villages selling wares , clothes, boots and all kind of sundries to the farmers and their workers .Also he did well for himself After having saved enough money ,not very long after ,he opened a small store and continued to produce shafts for jackboots ,a craft he was acquainted with and very good at ..Then his bride , my mother left her home , parents and her family and joined him They married and settled down in their newly purchased house Their first child , a son .named Jakob was born on the 13 th. of August 1920 On the 29th. of August 1922 .their second son Bernhardt saw the light of day .My parents led a happy and blissful existence , after leaving this terrible land Poland with its privations , the anti -Semitism and the dire poverty Now their children had a future to look forward to They slept in separate beds , while in Poland several children shared the same bed and never saw a toy in all their lives . There was enough money to plan and to .secure an education for the children , the dream of all Jewish parents . Germany was a country of poets, thinkers , of musicians .philosophers ,a country for everybody , whatever their religious or political persuasion . A free country , a wonderful country , filled with laughter and with joy ,enough to eat and the opportunity to lead a decent and satisfactory existenc

And then like a thunderclap , the terrible Inflation of 1924 wiped out all their savings. Money became useless The nomination of the money was in billions A loaf of bread or a pair of shoes costing billions of Marks The weekly wages had to be transported in a wheelborrow





. They decided to sell everything and emigrate to Palestine . My parents , their two sons and his brother Max who had also settled in the town , traveled to Trieste in Italy and with a ship sailed to Jaffa, the only port in Palestine . Both of them lived in the then very small and primitive ,all -Jewish city of Tel -Aviv .

My father bought a horse and buggy and made his living, taxiing people all over the city .It was called a droshky My uncle Max worked in his profession as a tailor , making suits,pants and shirts for the Jewish population and jabaleas for the Arabs .

After aproximately one year, they decided to quit and again liquidated everything , packed up and with the intention of returning to the town they had left only a short while earlier .

While on the ship, the son of my uncle Max got very ill and when they reached Marseilles , he and his family disembarked and hospitalised the child , with the intention of joining my parents after the recovery of their son .They, alas made a different decision .When their son was released from the hospital , they moved to Paris where the rest of their three children were born .As fate would have it , the whole family survived the war by fleeing to Vichy France and hiding with a farmer whom Max paid to provide his family with a refuge .Two of his sons joined the French resistance , the Maquis and after the end of the war they all returned to Paris to the home they had left .When I was a soldier serving in the British Army I searched and found the family of whom I had never met anyone before ,including my uncle and my aunt , The only ones I could converse with were the parents ,in the Yiddish language .which none of the children were acquainted with , knowing only French .All of them were ardent communists , believing that Stalin was the saviour and the redeemer of mankind ,absoulutely and adamantly opposed to the idea of a Jewish state .And all that after the events of the Holocaust ! . . .

.I was born very soon after my parents returned to Güstrow . They again bought a house, .this time in the Baustrasse 34 , where I lived to the very day I left my mother and my home , to be sent to a Jewish orphanage in the .Port-city of Stettin ,.in the province of Pomarenia

At the end of the street was a barbershop .where my father was a regular customer ..There he met up with all his buddies who came to have their hair cut or to have a shave. On a shelve were shaving mugs with the names of all the regular customers written on them . Amongst the names like . Otto ., Hans . Karl , August ,,Alfred , Heinz , Emil , the name " Benjamin " was embossed .on one of the mugs .We all were very proud , that our father was so honored and so revered .

In the winter of 1935 my father traveled to Poland to visit his family .It was a particularly cold winter and I read in the local newspaper , that some people in Poland had succumbed to the cold . I told my mother of this terrible calamity and immediately both of us rushed to the postoffice to send an urgent telegram to my father , whether he was still alive ..



We did not have to wait very long for a reply : " Dreh , nish ka Kopp" and don't waste money I'm o. k. was written in the telegram .

The whole family were at the railway station as my father returned after a stay of four weeks .Beside greetings from all members of his and my mother's family , he also brought a lot of presents for all of us. The most exiting present was a Krakower sausage, spiced with lots of garlic .

**Guten Morgen Herr Krüger** shouted all pupils , as Krüger limped into the classroom .He was dressed in the uniform of the S. A . the Nazi Brownshirt party .He wore the standard black jackboots , had a swastika on his sleeve and a leather belt diagonally across his puny chest . He lifted his right arm and shouted Heil Hitler , Heil Hitler.! The whole class jumped to their feet and answered in unison also shouting : " Heil Hitler , Heil Hitler ! Krüger , a rather tiny man was wounded in the 1st World War , causing him to limp and he always blamed the Jews for having started that war. He could not forgive them for his impairment His small arse did not fill his breeches and it fluttered in the wind like a flag , making me wonder , whether his arse had been shot off by the Tommies in the battle of the Ardennes . : :

The very next day after the return of my father from Poland , my mother prepared me sandwiches with the Krakower sausage, my father had brought with him from Poland, to take to school . I was looking forward to eat them in the interval .I put them under my desk , when farty Krüger entered our classroom . Again dressed in his brown uniform , he raised his arm in the Nazi salute and yelled : " Heil Hiii++ . He didn't finish the Hitler . He began to sniff with his crooked nose and exclaimed : " Knoblauch . Knoblauch . ( Garlic , garlic).

Knoblauch was what all the dirty Jews ate ,and of course the pigs ate Knoblauch too . .It was impossible to get close to the Jews because they all stank of Knoblauch . A German Aryen would never touch garlic with a 10 foot pole .So ,Krüger went from desk to desk pretending to search for the villain with the garlic, knowing all the time ,where the garlic was to be found .At last he reached my desk , took my beloved sandwiches between his thumb and his forefinger holding them as far as possible from his body, lest he be contaminated , and then he took me by the scruff of the neck and threw me out of the door , my sandwiches came flying after me..I picked myself up , gathered my sandwiches and while eating them , made my way home . He could not spoil my appetite, they really tasted good ...

I told my mother what had occurred and with indignation she took her hat and her handbag and holding me by the hand rushed to the school .Without knocking at the door of the principal she entered his room .She told him in angry high tones what Krüger had done to her son and demanded that he should be called to his office ..

" Frau Grossmann " he said in a subdued voice: " There is nothing I can do, we are living in difficult times " From that day on , all my classmates accompanied me home , crying after me in unison ;





"

**Jude Itzik, Nase Spitzik ,Ohren dreckig ,Arschloch speckig "**

**( Jew Itzig , Nose pointed ,Ears dirty, Arshole greasy )**

. Suddenly my father got ill and his family was informed , how grave his condition was.. I was at home when the the bell tinkled in in our store , and I went to see who the customer was .There were two woman , one of them was young and the second rather elderly The elderly woman was dressed in a light raincoat and wore a wig in accordance with the Jewish tradition where married woman were obliged to cover their hair. A moment later my mother entered the store and upon recognising the elderly person ,she cried out :. " Mamele , Mamele , and both fell into each others arms .with tears running down their cheeks .

. The young woman ;a Gentile, told my mother that she had assisted my grandmother by accompaneing her all the way to the home of her son .My grandmother embraced and kissed me, murmuring several times over " Maan Einikel , maan Einikel ".( My grandson , my grandson ) All three of us went upstairs to the bedroom, where my very sick father was lying in bed .

When my father saw his mother , he burst into tears crying : " Bewaan miech nischt , bewaan miech nischt . ( Don't cry , over me, don't cry over me ) .His mother had come over from faraway Poland to visit her very sick son .For about one month she looked after him , nursed and spoiled him and than she left to return to her husband and family .

Soon after she left ,my father died. It was the 25th of August 1936 . 12.30 at night . leaving my mother bereft a widow with 4 growing children . According to the Jewish calender it was the 7th. of Elul , 5694 years after the creation of the world and .I was 9 years old .

. He died in my mothers arms and .he was 43 years old Jewish neighbors came to our house and laid his body on the floor , covered it with a sheet and surrounded it with burning candles , according to Jewish custom . My face was pale and my lips turned white and drawn at this shocking sight My mother shrieked and then fell to the ground in a faint .

Three days later the funeral took place A cortege following the ornate and opulant hearse drawn by two black horses , decked out in feathers and sumptuous ornaments, followed by every member of the Jewish community ,walking on foot behind the hearse , made their way to the cemetery . Passing the militarybarracks , the guard jumped to attention and presented arms . It was sultry and somewhat sunny , the day my father was interred . My mother was left with four children at a time when the Nazis boycotted all Jewish businesses and establishments She had to face up to an impossible and formidable situation .She had to face the rising hatred and unexplainable venom of those German inhuman monsters

..

**My Mother !**



My mother's name was Nycha and her maiden name was Kramkimel. Her parents' names were Chajim and Ruchle Kramkimel and her mother's maiden name was Abramovitz. She was born on the 18th of November 1895, in Warsaw, Poland. They lived in Krochmalna Street, which was close to the Nalevka where my father's family lived. Both streets were located in the Jewish district of the capital. I know nothing about her family, about her parents, nor anything about the siblings she had. She never talked about her family, nor did she ever mention how many brothers and how many sisters she had. A veritable enigma. I have in my possession a photograph with her father sitting on a chair and my mother standing beside him, slender, with a tender smile, and two plaits framing her face, proudly holding the hands of her two younger brothers. This photo was taken in Poland and she was at the time about seventeen years old.

She was a beautiful woman, affable and very good natured, forever trying to give a helping hand to neighbors and friends. Jews and non-Jews alike. She had a lovely voice lullibying me in Yiddish to sleep. "Schluff maan Kindele, schluff." She told me many stories by Yiddish writers like Shalom Alechem, Shalom Ash, Isaak Barsheves Singer and many others. She introduced me to Jewish folklore, to anecdotes and parables, all of which acted as an armour protecting me from all those whose intentions were to harm me.

When it was raining, I lay in bed reading books which my mother bought for me. She spared no money and bought me all the books under the sun. She wanted her children to be successful in life and therefore encouraged all of us to read as many books as possible. I lived in a world of wonder and enchantment, and in my imagination I became the hero in all the books I read. I read the books of Karl May, Erich Kästner, Erich Maria Remarque, Thomas Mann, Leo Feuchtwanger, Tolstoy, Dostojevski and many others. The penny novels of Tom Schark and John Kling were no strangers to me.

I made the acquaintance of the most wonderful book by the American writer Mark Twain. It was called Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. In this book he describes how these two hid on a remote island for over two weeks. In spite of all efforts by the police and the local community to discover their whereabouts, they could not be found. Huckleberry Finn, fed up with living on fish and the vegetation they ate, wanted to come out of hiding and return to civilisation, but Tom Sawyer urged him to stay, whispering his secret into his ear. Huckleberry Finn enthusiastically agreed. The following Sunday, when all hope was given up to find those two rascals, the preacher in the church, in his sermon sadly told his flock, that presumably the two wonderful boys had been eaten by crocodiles and it was to be presumed, that they were no longer amongst the living. Everybody in the church wept and cried, while the preacher praised those two boys how industrious, how godfearing and obedient they had been, when suddenly both of them, dirty and with torn clothes entered the church. The woman swooned and the men ran toward the two, to kiss and embrace them, thanking the Lord for the miracle and the wonder of having brought back those two poor





children .

A farmworker came into our store to buy a pair of my father's hand made boots. He removed one of his shoes to measure the boots, when I was struck as if by a clap of thunder. A smell like rotten Swiss cheese came from his torn socks " Oih , stinken saane fieess " exclaimed my mother " ! ( Wow , his feet stink ) " , Ja , answered the farmworker in German , I did not have the time to wash my feet " . " Oih a Broch er verstaah", my mother said in embarrassment ( Oh my God , he understands ) . Ja , he said " Ich verstehe " . ( I understand ! ) Both of us , my mother and me, split our sides . . .

In our yard there was a toilet and the door had a hole in the shape of a heart which served as a ventilating system . Every six months, two men with a horse and wagon on which there were a number of barrels , came to empty the contents of the toilet . They wore leather aprons and Wellington boots With a big ladle they filled some buckets and poured them into the barrels The stench was so overpowering , that I fled the scene for better smelling pastures My mother always prepared sandwiches and beer for the two men and they sat in the yard . next to the shithouse devouring the food , not caring in the least about the smell .

My ring , my ring cried my mother in distress . My ring fell into the toilet . I'll buy you another one , said my father No, this is my wedding ring . It is only this one I want I do not want another My father could not console her She was adamant . She wanted her ring , so my father took a big wooden pole and started to stir and rummage in the shit , trying to fish the ring out of the mire . After a while and creating a repulsive odor, which made my ears ache , he managed to retrieve the coveted ring . He washed the ring under the tap and handed it triumphantly to my happily smiling mother.

On the 20th of December 1937, my mother was married to Hermann Fliesswasser and moved with my sister Zilly to Stralsund . Hermann had two children , a son named Wolfgang and a daughter whose name was also Zilly .

After the Kristall Nacht ( The Night of the broken Glass ) on the 10th. of November 1938 all of them crossed the Belgian border illegally and settled down in Brussels, the capital of Belgium In 1942 they were sent with the rest of the Belgian Jews to a camp in Malines and from there with the Transport No : 11/1118 to the death camp Auschwitz. My mother , my sister, her husband and his little daughter all were were gassed in the gas chambers of Auschwitz / Birkenau .

If it were at all possible to forgive the Germans for the terrible deeds they did to the Jewish people , it is quite impossible for me to forgive them for what they did to my mother , for causing her her so much suffering and for murdering her. " . Mutti " I said to her when I was only 9 years old , " I give you my solemn vow , for each tear you shed , I will make the Germans shed a thousand tears " 60 Years later my eyes fill with tears as I remember how she cried . She was 47 years old and in the prime of her life I will never understand , I will never forget and I will never forgive . They were brought to Auschwitz in cattlecars, meant for



six horses , crammed with many, many people ,old and young , without food nor drink and no toilets ,and on arrival at the camp , were led naked into the shower-rooms where instead of water, gas streamed from the showerheads Their death struggle , the horror and the choking .and then the deathly silence Civilised people kill animals for food , but try to avoid unnecessary suffering to the animals .The Germans tortured , caused suffering and torment to a defenseless and innocent people .They hanged young girls and boys on the gallows, hung naked people on trees in the middle of winter and sprayed them with water until they turned into blocks of ice.They did all this with diabolical and satanic enjoyment ,so how can anyone understand ? I have spoken to many survivors and everyone told me of their suffering . Not a single person told me , what their thoughts were , of what the Germans were doing and why they were doing it .All they could think of , was how to get hold of a piece of bread.

### **Jakob my Eldest Brother !**

Jakob was born on the 13th .of August 1920 He , being the first born was to bring glory and prestige to the family . From early age on , my parents tried desperately for Jakob to become a scholar. Neither of my parents could read nor write and having come to Germany , new vistas presented themselves and the opportunity for all their children to gain an education ,turned from wishful thinking into reality But to their disappointment and to their chagrin , my brother just did not have , what it takes to study and to become a doctor , a lawyer or an engineer .He was singleminded and steadfast in his desire to emigrate to Palestine and to become a farmer To work the land , raise cattle , sheep and chickens, grow wheat and oats and plant fruit trees. And that is what he did ..After the war , he did go to Erez Jisrael ,joined a Moshav ( Communal farm ) and fulfilled his lifelong ambition .He became an expert in the growing of Peanuts ,and Pecan nuts . .

My father did not take too kindly .to the idea that his first born son wanted to go to Palestine He had been there and had left the country disillusioned and found it quite unfitting for his son .For him Germany was the land of promise In Poland the country of his birth ,he ,and all his family knew nothing but misery and wretchedness There was terrible anti- -- Semitism and the Jews lived in fear and in anxiety of their Catholic neighbors. The government was hostile to them and all of them hated the Jews for they had crucified the son of God , their saviour .The Jews only went to courts presided over by rabbis , for justice was not to be found in the Polish courts . . .

Jakob had an irritating habit of rubbing his forefinger under his nose , making at the same time a dreadful noise emanating from his nose It sounded as though he was being strangled,suffocating ,and like the crescendo of a trumpet , ending with a noise





likend to the screeching of emergency brakes of a car .My father was dreadfully irritated by these outlandish fixations .and gave him the name : " Der Schnorfler "

It was winter and both Jakob and myself overslept. Hurriedly we dressed and rushed to school . Both of us were late , when we entered our respective classrooms . The teacher asked Jakob the reason why he had come too late for school . " My father is sick and I had to go to the pharmacy to bring him some medicine What is wrong ,with your father"? asked his teacher . " My father has the haemorrhoids " retorted my bright brother blithely .When I entered my classroom , the teacher asked me the same question , why I had come late to school , and I said : " My father is sick and I had to go to the pharmacy to get him some medicine .He suffers from the haemorrhoids . Suddenly the door opened and Jakob`s teacher entered my classroom ". What is going on here with this Grossmann" ? he asked . Was he also late for school "? Yes answered my teacher , his father is sick , and he had to go to the pharmacy to get him some medicine . His father suffers from the haemorrhoids."

That very day during the interval , a boy taunted my brother and called him a dirty Jew and that all Jews were liars and cheaters .So Jakob got hold of him, lifted him up in the air and dropped him to the ground . While straining to lift him , the seam of his pants came apart , revealing his pink buttocks .All the pupils who had assembled to watch the fray , burst into laughter and then applauded : ":Good for you Jeckel , good for you, Jeckel ". He became a famous celebrity and from that day on, everybody called him ;" The Yid with the haemorrhoids Lid .,for he always wore a small beret with a tussle .

Jakob adored me and treated me as if I were his son .He had a wonderful heart ,always looking to help and assist people . He never refused a request from neighbors ,friends and strangers , and especially from me .He loved Erez Jisrael with a fierce love and considered all his livestock as Jewish animals As fate would have it , in the Sinai Campaign in 1956 both of us were in the same unit fighting against the Egyptians , I as his commanding officer and he as my second in command .

I lost my beloved brother on the 2nd of April 1986 or according to the Jewish calender. the 25th of Sivan , 5746 .He died of cancer of the Pancreas I was griefstricken , I had lost a brother , a father and a wonderful friend May his soul rest in peace and the angels take good care of him .

### **Bernhardt my Second Srother !**

Bernhardt was born on the 29th, of August 1922.,and my God did he have problems. .I wish them on all my enemies . Also he had a wonderful disposition , but albeit , for a price . He had a remarkable appetite, likened to a barrel without a bottom . He could finish off in one



day , what his whole family could not eat in a whole week .After a hefty meal ,without taking a break , he would have no problem to devour another one .

He suffered from a weak bladder , and had little control over his stomach . My poor mother was in despair , coping with the wash, but, as already said , Bernhardt was a likable and affable person and he never ever refused to come to the assistance of his fellow man .

One day, Bernhardt traveled to Teterow on the train .On the opposite seat sat Obersturmführer Schmidt who lived in the same street as we did .He was dressed in a S .A. uniform ,a brown cap on his head , polished black jackboots and a swastika on the sleeve of his left arm .Schmidt was a giant of a man with bushy eyebrows ,and rough red hands .He had the face of a goodnatured infantile , with beady and cunning eyes and .with a gruff and beery voice " Just have a look at those fields , how barren they are ," he said to Bernhardt . And. do you know the reason , why they are so barren ? " I don't know" said Bernhardt in the local dialect ".I haven't the slightest clue " " It is because the Jews shit on those fields , that is why nothing grows there ! Hmm ,Hmm ,murmured my second brother and said nothing more .After a while ,Schmidt's head dropped on to his chest and he fell into a slumber .He snored like a sawmill and whistled through his bulbous nose , when his cap fell off his head and dropped to the ground His cranium was revealed and there was not a single hair on his head , his napper was completely bald .Bernhardt picked up the hat of the Obersturmführer and with his forefinger poked him several times on the chest to wake him up ".Herr Obersturmführer " he said " Have the Jews also shit on your head "?

Bernhardt decided to make a lot of money, because working was for horses and when working , there was no time to make money .So he went and bought a lottery ticket. (Los ). He left the shop and wanted to check over the number on the ticket he bought, but he could not find the blasted ticket .He looked in all his pockets ,turned them inside out , but there was no ticket He went back and forth, retracing his steps , but he just could not find it So he went back into the shop and asked the blond and very attractive young saleswoman : "Entschuldigen sie bitte , aber habe ich hier ein Los gelassen ?" Excuse me , but did I leave one here "? The young lady sniffed with her sweet and cute nose in all directions and said : " I don't think so , I can't smell anything."!

For some unexplainable reason , Bernhardt stank the whole time of rotten eggs My mother took him and myself to Dr Krausemann who lived in the Mühlstrasse .The doctor staggered a few paces back and could not believe his nose ,when the three of us entered his room : " Mein Gott ,was is das? ".he exclaimed ! He examined him from head to foot He listened with a stethoscope to his heart , his lungs and his kidneys. He knocked with the knuckel of his forefinger of his right hand between the two fingers of his left hand on his chest and on his stomach.With an Ah, Ah stick he examined his throat . With a flashlight he examined his eyes and his ears , then he stuck two of his fingers into his rectum to determine





whether he had ,God forbid piles or haemorrhoids, or may be a prostate problem .With a hammer he knocked on his crossed knee to find out whether his reflexes were in working order .He looked at the soles of his feet to determine whether he had flat feet , which did not surprise me in the least, because Bernhardt`s ancestors had wandered in the hot sands of thre desert for forty years .

Dr .Krausmann folded his stethoscope with a thoughtful and pensive look on his face, looking over the rim of his spectacles he turned to my mother and said : " Frau Grossmann , I have been in practise for over forty years and: I have never come across such symptoms .I do believe that your son suffers from too short a skin . Everytime when he closes his eyelids , his bottom opens up .

" Dr Krausemann I .have a solution to his problems ", I chirped ," Prop a plug into his Arse ."

A Schand far de Goyim ,a Shand far de Goyim , ( A shame for the Gentiles , a shame for the Gentiles ) my mother yelled ,as she dragged me holding me by my ear from the Mühlstrasse to our house in the Baustrasse .

Bernhardt was also a very good brother,and we loved each other , although at times .I was somewhat embarressed by his antics , but what the heck, doesn`t everybody pull his trousers down when they go to the toilet ? He died on the 1st of August 19 88 according to the Jewish calender on th 18th.of Av 5748 , of heart failure . I wish I had done more for him I was the only left from my family .

### **Ali the Youngest Son !**

I was given the name Adolf , but I was always called Ali . It was a diminutive , a nickname and if somebody would have addressed me as Adolf , I would have looked over my shoulder to find out whom they were talking to .I was born on the 21st of March anno 1925 and there was not to be found in the whole world a worse mamser ( rascal ) than me ..constantly getting into fights , scheming tricks , imitating and making fun of .people , agile and nimble like a monkey. I was a veritable terror . Very few boys, could compete with me in sports I was the fasted runner , exellent in light athletics and not bad at all in the swimming pool .Everyboy called me Ali Grossmaul ( Bigmouth,) I was full of energy and exuberance and sported an astonishing capacity for stamina and a zest for living .The anti- Semites , they could kiss my arse and look for greener fields . My social life was centered around the boys ,Jews and non-Jews alike from the Baustrasse .

On the warm summer nights we all used to sit on the steps .of family Henning`s house Henning was a counselor of the city and his son was one of our gang . Hermann Holtz, who lived with his aunt above the barbershop at the end of Baustrasse beginning of Pferdemarkt , told us erotic tales . About young maidens who were ravished by big strong



men and of men and woman who had orgys and wild parties revelling till the early hours . All of us were so exited, that it could easily be discerned in our pants .In order to avoid my mother, I always sneaked furtively into our house,. but my mother was waiting for me with a carpetbeater and I always crept under the bed ,while she was trying to reach me , yelling at the top of her voice : " Di klaaner Mamser di , wuuss ward van dir waarden ." ( You little rascal, what will become of you )

On other nights we would stand in a row and compete who could piss farthest .It was Brummer who left all of us lagging behind . He reached undisputed distances and heights .and to crown his victory , he would let go a salvo of terrific farts enough to give you an inferior complex .

Twice a week we all attended Hebrew classes .in an annex next to the synagogue ..Our teacher was the Cantor Blumenfeld .We learned the Hebrew Alphabet and .It did not take me very long to master reading and writing in ancient Hebrew .With his broad finger he pointed to a word he wanted me to enunciate , but I never knew to which his fat finger was pointed at, so invariably I read the wrong word . He smote me with the ruler on my knuckles , thinking that I did this on purpose , to annoy him .

I was so pissed off with him , that I decided to teach him a lesson One fine afternoon , when the coast was clear, I sneaked to his home . pulled down my pants and left a variable amount on his doorstep . Very satisfied with my work , I returned to our street to continue to play where I had left off . Suddenly I saw Blumenfeld approachig from the top of the street making his way to our house . How in heavens name had he found out who the culprit was and in such a short time ? I quickly fled the scene and returned to our house in the evening hoping against hope to enter without being noticed , but alas, there she was laying in wait for me in ambush , with the carpetbeater . But as always , time has a knack of making things mellow and soon our household got back to routine .

Cantor Blumenfeld , being a religous man and of magnanimous disposition,forgave me , looking at this incident as a youthful indiscretion ..He forgave, but he did not forget .

Every week I went to his house to have a chicken slaughtered .I rang the bell and after a while he came down , carrying a black case inlaid with purple velvet. He was dressed in a long chequered dressing gown ,which reached to his ankels On his head he had a fez with a pompon und a vey long meerscham pipe clenched between his teeth ..

He took the chicken and examined it for blemishes , then he got hold of the cam of the bird pulled it backward to expose its neck , took a long knife from the case and while uttering a silent blessing cut the throat of the unfortunate chicken . Then he threw it into a bush, where the chicken ran around in circles crowing and gurgling .until it eventually dropped and lay prostrate and lifeless on the ground . I paid the Cantor for his services , took the bird by its two feet and carried it home .It was always a shocking and traumatic experience , renewed , everytime I took another chicken for slaughter . My mother took the





chicken, plucked its feathers , and held it over a flame to singe off the plumes .With a sharp knife she then cut it into portions , soaked it in hot water for many hours and then spread a very generous amount of salt on all parts of the dissected chicken .All this in order to remove all traces of blood , for according to Jewish law one is not allowed to eat any blood from any animal destined for consumption .

She prepared lockschen soup ,.baked chicken , megel ,chopped liver ,zimmes grieven and other delicacies for the whole family and it lost all association with the murder of the chicken and with the food I ate with such appetite on a Friday evening , until I again went with yet another chicken to witness this abject carnage .

Once a month I was sent to Dr . Krausemann to be irradiated with ultra.violet rays I lay on a bed.half naked , with my chest exposed with blue lensed goggles covering my eyes. My mother was very concerned about my health ,as I was very lean and was loath to eat .I ,albeit was very healthy indeed , though looking somewhat pale , but had no medical problems at all . I imagined to be a pilot or a racing car driver, making the movements with my two hands as if holding a steering wheel of a racing car .or the joystick of an aeroplane, racing at terrific speed through space .With my mouth I made noises like a thundering ear-piercing motor Dr Krausemann , stroking my head ,with an amused smile on his lips, always asked me how many miles per hour I had reached this time . .

All of my Jewish friends are no more , every single one murdered by the Nazis and some of my non -Jewish friends fell in the war . I met three of them fifty years later ,all searching for absolution ,not comprehending , how all this could have happened , our relationship strenghtend by this unexplainable occurence

### **Zilli , my Little Sister**

What can I write about a child who was " bescheert " (destined ) to live only twelve years ? Everybody remarked how beautiful she was .She had black eyes and brown ,shiny straight hair, beautiful white teeth and violet lips, a voice like a nightingale and a trim little .figure .She was of modest demeanour and possessed a remarkable sense of presence and of bearing .This she was given as present by God , being chosen to be the only female amongst three brothers .She reigned over them with quiet authority and with a dignity rarely seen in a person her age .We all loved her , spoiled her and called her our " Zillichen " Her lovely smile enchanted all those , she came in contact with and she made many friends ,all of whom came to visit our home ..

Her handwriting and her capacity for painting were superb . She also was a very good pupil and it seemed , that she was destined to be somebody in life .She spoke Geman ;Yiddish , Platt and French with a most beautiful intonation .Her life ended within the confines of the gas chambers where she was sent to with Transport No: 11/1118 on the 26th.





of September in the year 1942 .The German people will have to find a way how to live with what they did to her and to all those millions they did away with .

### **My First Schoolday .**

When I was six years old , life had to be taken seriously and I had to go to school .My mother went to a store and bought me a suit from a firm called Blyle . It was a terrible agony to wear this apparel , my whole body rebelled and scratched all over. I wore a blue student cap with a silver band and with outstretched arms , to avoid all contact with my skin, we made our way to the photographer . A satchel with a sponge to wipe the slate which was inside , hung down attached to a string .A big cardboard cone filled with chocolate and candy and a board on which was written in Gothic script : " Mein erster Schulgang " ( My first schoolday ) was at my feet On my mother`s face was a look of tender happiness and of pride . At last an academician in the family ,a doctor ,a lawyer ,an important personality .

The school was humming with activity .Hundreds of people , parents children and teachers were congregated in the big Aula ( Assembly Hall ) My heart was heavy, for this was the end of my freedom .Who in hell invented school ? There were so many wonderful things to be done ,and why this dark atmosphere of academy It was an affront to all my rights as a free person .I could not help myself and I burst into tears .My mother joined me , at seeing my misery , trying in vain to console me .

One of the teachers approached us and holding my hand tried to encourage and to comfort me ,You are a hero , he told me , like Siegfried who with one single blow drove the anvil into the ground and Hermann the Cherusker who defeated all of Germanys enemies ,.saving the fatherland What the teacher didn`t know , that I ,being an avid reader had read everything about these two shitboxes Siegfried shit in his pants , whenever he met a dragon and Hermann the Cherusker had a weak bladder and a running nose .

My education began and I was an average scholar and a dreamer .

### **The Jewish Community !**

The town had about thirty Jewish families, many of them were storekeepers , there were also doctors ,lawyers and some factory owners providing work for the locals About twelve families were Ostjuden ( Jews from Eastern Europe ) The German Jews ancestors had lived there since the 14th.century They build a sumptuous and ornate synagogue , a cemetery with a mortuary and they had a hearse The German Jews ,although adapting themselves to the German culture, adhered to their faith and all were nevertheless conscious of their Jewishness .



They looked upon the newcomers from the East as poor relations and with a feeling of discomfort .While the German Jews spoke the German language ( Hochdeutsch ) like everybody else , the Ostjuden spoke it with a thick accent , interspersed .with Yiddish words .Their wives wore ostentacious clothes and showy jewelery and brought with them the custom of having dentures made of gold .

My parents spoke Yiddish at home with their children and with the other Jews from the East , but spoke in their heavily accented German to Jews of German origin and to the non - Jews .It was an embarassment to me, as like everybody else we were influenced by the Nazis who called Yiddish " Kauderwelsch " A hybrid language ". Julius Streicher , the head of the S. A .published a newspaper , called " Der Stürmer " It was a venomous , deriding and insultig rag slandering the Jews and their language .What that dope did not know , how rich that language was , the writers , the poets and the culture .For me it was of course something else .To the sound of that language I fell asleep, as my mother sat at my bedside and told me stories making me feel safe and secure , protecting me like a shield from all those who were scheming to do us harm .It brought back ,smells and sounds and memories .

The twelve families from the East were divided between those from Congress Polen and those from Galicia .My parents were from Congress Polen and there not being a law for attending school ,and at the same being too poor , none of the children were privileged to get an education .In Galicia ,which was part of the Austro -Hungarian Habsburg Empire , there was a law , and they all knew how to read and to write .This created a tension between the two and culminated at times in jealous disputes which caused them not to speak to each other or to allow their children to play with the other children . .

On the Jewish festivals , all the Jews who lived in smaller locations surrounding our town ,came to stay with their co-religionists in order to be able to take part in the services and all the celebrations .Cantor Blumenfeld led the prayers with a powerful and heavy metal voice .He, and the blowing of the Shofar could be heard all over the town and the Christians called this " Eine Juden Schule " not understandig , or bothering to find out what this was all about .On Yom Kipur he prayed with fervor and devotion dragging out every word to such length, as to make me check my watch to see how long it would take him to finish one single sentence .

A caretaker with his wife and his twelve year old son adminestered the synagogue and the whole complex .They lived in one of the apartments , which was part of he synagogue domain. They were Christians, and their task was to maintain , clean and do all the repairs needed to keep the synagogue shipshape. On Friday night ,they lit the gaslamps , put a prayerbook on every place and and in the winter lit the stove to heat the .prayerroom .On Saturday eve at the close of the Sabbath , they turned off the gaslight, the heat and stored all prayerbooks in a cupboard .His wife prepared refreshments for all the participants while his son gave his father a helping hand .On the festivals he collected the money for the





entrance to take part in the prayers ,as there was only limited room and the committee needed revenue to maintain the synagogue .

Father and son entered the synagogue always without headcovering , which seemed strange and incongruous to me The son had a head like a watermelon and his hair was shorn " Hindenburg "style .which made his head look even bigger .

When Hitler came to power , he joined the D.J ( Nazi youth movement ) and from that day on, he never took his uniform off .It seemed to me that he even slept in it He sported a swastika on his left arm , had a leather belt across his chest and a tie made of braided leather .He continued to help his father , but constantly cursed the dirty Jews They both did all the duties and the work on the Sabbath , forbidden to the Jews They were called " The Shabbos Goyim " They continued to work for the community and did their assignments ,as if nothing had changed , except for their overbearing and hostile attitude toward their decent and upright employers.

Several times a year , my mother invited all the Jewish ladies to a " Kaffee -Klatsch " .

She and my sister Zilly worked all week to prepare for this important event .They cleaned , they baked Streusselkuchen , Liebesknochen , Napoleonschnitt and Bienenstich.and got the house ready ,decking it out with flowers and decorating it with garlandery The whole house smelled of freshly brewed coffee and freshly baked cake All the ladies arrived , dressed in their best attire and a hair do, smelling of perfume, I could discern the whale bonebars of their corsets through their silken dresses .They all brought with them some present ,excited and happy..Everybody talked at the same time ,creating a din enough to endanger our eardrums .My father went to his friend Janoschka and we boys fled and went to the nearby meadow where we played football .

Amongst the guests there was a widow who had a candyshop . Many a time on my way home from school, I used to enter her store and buy candy or chocolate which was left over or broken . She always gave me a very generous portion ,charging me very little ..

She called me Bubi or Klein Aichen She was a very nice lady ,but the only problem was, that she created a terrible stink in our house With a suffering look on her face she said :: "Ich leide an schrecklichen Blähungen " ( I suffer from terrible wind ) , I couldn't for the life of me fathom out why she had to let go of her wind in the Baustrasse ,our house , instead of blähing in her own apartment. In the evening all of us returned home , to find all the windows wide open in order to clear the air But mother and Zillichen were radiant, telling us with pride how all had enjoyed themselves and had relished the cake they had baked .. Proof of that was, all the empty plates and not a crumb left .on the table

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## **Bne Jeschurun the Jewish Youth Club !**

In the year 1934 Jürgen Maibergen and Otto Steinweg established the Jewish Youth Club , called Bneh Jeschurun .Jürgen was a boy only fourteen years old and Otto fifteen All the Jewish children of Güstrow and of all closeby localities joined this club We went on outings and all of us learned the Israeli folk dance ,the Horrah and we studied modern Hebrew, called Ivrit Both Jürgen and also Otto , despite their young age were very charismatic and had a strong and compelling influence over all members of the club . Very handsome and intelligent , both managed the club with astute circumspection .In the evenings we sat around the bonfire singing Israeli and Jewish songs ,.which talked about freedom ,about selfdetermination and of building up the land , a land where all Jews could live without fear ,with a rifle in one hand and in the other a plough .We held competitions in sports and held Quiz. There, in the forests we forgot for a while the tribulations and the persecutions which were our daily lot .Decency and honesty was our motto .To be proud of our Jewishness and of our tradition and never to compromise .Throughout the passing sixty years which were like a shadow following all Jews wherever they were , I never forgot Jürgen or Otto. I found them again .not knowing, whether they had survived the Holocaust, or whether they were amongst the living or the dead .I discovered Jürgen in Frankfurt and Otto living not far from where I live ,.in the land of Israel in the city of Jerusalem . May God grant to Jürgen and to Otto many years of good health and of happiness

It is written in the Talmud , that the generation of the desert was the the very best, . (The.children of Israel who wandered in the desert for forty years ,but were not allowed to enter the land of Canaan because of their sins ).despite the sins they committed .The generation of Jürgen and of Otto was the best .The loss to the German nation of such human material cannot be evaluated by all the riches of the world .When the Germans started to persecute the Jews , their downfall was unavoidable and inexorable .

**Das 3te Reich - Deutschland erwache !. . .**

**. .**

**( The 3rd Reich Germany awake ! )**

**Güstrow ist Judenrein ( Güstrow is free of Jews )**

In 1941 the German authorities forced the few remaining Jews who still lived in the town to sit on the Jewish hearse , while some others were made to take the place of the horses between the shafts and pull the hearse through the streets of the town . Some of the Jews had medals , won in the 1st World War pinned onto their chest The inhabitants of the town , crowded the sidewalks, applauding and rejoicing at the degradation of their fellow citizen A shame and a disgrace to the people of Germany for eternity





The whole German nation were enthusiastic and devoted to the Hitler regime ,with a raised arm , they shouted with ardent fervour : " Sieg Heil ,Sieg Heil . Ein Volk , Ein Reich , Ein Führer .Die Juden sind unser Unglück. Die Juden sind unser Verderben ! Judah verrecke., Heute gehört uns Deutschland und morgen die ganze Welt . Das 3te Reich wird 1000 Jahre bestehen Deutschland erwache ,Deutschland erwache ! . Those people who had families , who had wives or husbands, parents and children , sisters and brothers ,showed no pity nor compassion ,devoid of any human feelings .Only hate..The only country which had virtually no resistance movement .As long as there were victories Sieg Heil ,Sieg Heil ! but as soon as there were the first signs of defeat and no hope to win the war , von Stauffenberg made an attempt on Hitler`s life and to overthrow the Nazi Regime Had Germany triumphed and won the war , the Führer at his death , would be lying in a mauseum and his people would be standing in endless lines to pay him homage , .

### **My Return !**

Often I dream that I am standing in front of our door and I want to enter our house .I put my hand on the doorhandle , I press it down in order to open the door, I wake up bathed in sweat .I am sad and depressed May be it was only a dream ? It seems impossible that so many people died and certainly not my family If I would only manage to open the door and get into the house , I am sure to find everybody inside waiting for me to start thr meal .They are all sitting around the table in the Dunkle Zimmer ( DarkRoom ) impatiently asking me :'' Ali , where have you been ? We are waiting for you a long time .It is quite impossible to grasp what really happened there When will I get some peace , Ruler of the world , the Compassionate , Where was your compassion when my mother and my sister were led to their death ? Can you really expect us to trust you ? I will try and find the answer to that .

In 1945 when I was a soldier , stationed in Bielefeld , Westphalia , I went A.W.O.L. ( Absent without leave` ) I went to the railway station and bought myself a ticket for Güstrow .I was sure I would find everybody there , like I saw in my dream . I had to find out .As I sat waiting for the train to move , some English military policemen came in to check the passengers.and their documents One of them asked me for my A.B 64 my army book .I also showed him a forged permit for a six day furlough ".Where in hell are going to" ? he asked me " To the town of Güstrow , I answered naively " Don`t you know , that this is in the Russian zone ? " Get off this blasted train before the Russians will nab you and send you to Siberia " ! gathered up my pack , left the train and took the ferry going to England .

In 1991 while living in San-Francisco , I contacted a Travel agency which dealt with the D. D, R ( Deutsche Demokratische Republik ). Eastern Germany . They told me bluntly , that there was absolutely no possibility to get an entrance visa to the D.D,R. for the holder of an Israeli passport " Out of the Question" was their reply Beside a visa, one needs a permit to travel within the country and a reservation with a hotel .





I wrote a letter to the Bürgermeister ( Mayor ). of the town, describing who I was and that I wanted to visit the town of my birth To my surprise , I did not have to wait a very long time, I received a very cordial letter ,signed Filia , the Bürgermeister of the town granting me a visa , a permit to travel wherever I wanted and. a reservation in a small boarding-house .

I flew with T.W.A. from San-Francisco to Frankfurt and on the very same day I took another plane and flew to Hamburg .I signed in, into a small hotel and wandered through the streets of the town I was very restless and somewhat apprehensive ,thinking about the next day , when I might at last after more than 50 years return to Güstrow Would it be another of those recurrent nightmares? Would I wake up in a cold sweat .and not be able to enter our house ?

I returned to the hotel , had a shower and tried to fall asleep . Surprisingly I slept through the night and woke up refreshed and very hungry .I made my way to the diningroom which was already filled with some guests .A smell of coffee and fresh rolls , permeated the room On .the tables were white starched tablecloths and freshly cut flowers .One of the waitresses , dressed in black and with a white apron aproached me, greeting me with a hearty " Guten Morgen , wie haben sie geschlafen "? ( Good morning , how did you sleep )

There were freshly baked rolls , butter and all kinds of cheese , herring ,cream and honey. I ate with a great appetite and the attentive ,very attractive waitress asked me several times, if I needed anything more So kind ,so clean and so concerned about my comforts .

I rented a car and and after a 2 hour drive , I reached the border .The customs official examined my passport and turned it over several times. It seemed as if it was the first time that he had seen an Israeli passport .Without a word he turned his back on me ,and dissapeared in one of the buildings They won't allow me to cross the border , yet another one of my nightmares .After , what seemed to me a very long time ,he returned and handed me my passport " Welcome to the German Democratic Republic" he said with a smile and with a flourish waved me over the border. I put my car into gear , gave too much gas and stuttered ,crossing the barrier into Eastern Germany ...

The rain pelted on the roof of the car, making it difficult to hear the music on the radio, but who cares ,I was going to the destination I had wanted to go to , for so many years ,if in the meantime I did not get a heart attack Somebody was speaking Platt on the radio and my heart was beating in my throat , as I saw after some time , the first .roadsigns with Güstrow written on it Güstrow 10 Kilometer , than 3 Kilometer and at last a bigger sign : **Kreisstadt .Güstrow** " I left the car and took a photo of the sign to make sure that I was not dreaming . .

Then I drove slowly into the town .It was about 5 o'clock in the afternoon and it was getting dark , but I recognised the Rathaus and the Pfarrkirche and the Platz was still paved with cobblestones Could nothing have changed since I left the town more than 50 years earlier ?



I drove through the Engestrasse around the Pferdemarkt, when I saw the sign in the Gothic script: "**Baustrasse**". It was the street I had lived in so many years ago. I stopped the car, took a deep breath and then took the plunge and started to drive down the cobblestoned street. Here on my left was the building of the fire department and here on my right the commercial school. I must have passed our house, because it was before the school, adjacent to it. I put the car in reverse, drove back a few meters and my God, my God, here was the house. The sloping roof with the red tiles, the same front door and the same doorhandle, or was it the same? The shop window was replaced with an ordinary window, but was the house really so small? I parked my car by the house, went to the door and put both my hands on the handle. I felt cold and my heart was beating very strong in my chest, It was like an euphoria!

According to the sign on the door, two families lived in the house. One family upstairs and the other one downstairs. I rang the bell several times, first the upstairs and then the downstairs bell, but apparently nobody was home. A young woman came and also pressed the bell and I told her that I had already pressed both bells several times and it seemed that no one was at home. She told me that she was an insurance agent collecting bills. Then she asked me courteously who I might be and I told her who I was, that I and my family had lived in this house, that they were no more, that I was the only one who was still alive and the house she was collecting insurance money for, belonged to me. Never in her life had she met a Jew, only from history books and through the media did she know what her country had done to the Jews and there the first time in her life she was face to face with a person who looked no different from her, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, spoke perfect German and did not have horns. She covered her face with her hands and began to cry. "How could this have happened, how could this have happened" she said between sobs. Tell it to your children, I said.

Opposite was the house where family Janoschka lived, The same shopwindow in which bicycle parts lay at random and in disorder. The same door. There too nothing had changed, but everything seemed smaller.

I decided, before paying a historical surprise visit to my childhood friend Jonny... to go to the boarding house, have a shower, take a rest and have something to eat.

I drove to the boarding-house in the Ulmerstrasse, parked my car and as I opened the door a bell tinkled just like in those days when I was a kid. A woman came out of her apartment and greeted me and said: "Willkommen Herr Grossmann may I show you to your room?" She led me up the stairs to a small but very clean room. In it was a huge peasant bed with an eiderdown and an inviting pillow, just like the one I had when I was a child. I told her, that I was going to stay for five days and that I would like to pay her. She told me the price, which was surprisingly low, but she added, according to the law of the land, all tourists had to pay in D marks, West German currency, Even with this edict, it was still a





bargain and I paid her what was due to her .I undressed and went to take a shower but when I opened the taps ,only a few drops of water fell slowly from the showerhead . I tried again , but that was it , only a few drops. I dressed , went to the apartment of the landlady and asked her about those poor drops of water ". Herr Grossmann ," she said " It took my husband six years to get the tiles for the bathroom ,there are no materials and no workers to change the clogged up water pipes So, I washed myself as well as I could and lay down on the bed to rest.I could not fall asleep,agitated and unable to believe that I was really in my hometown .My head was spinning and my stomach was queasy .

After a short while I left the boarding -house and made my way by foot to the Baustrasse.On passing the restaurant " Zum Rathaus" I decided to enter and get myself something to eat .I remembered this restaurant and in those days only the rich patronised it and now, I was about to enter the exclusive haunt of the affluent The restaurant was packed, reeking of pork and beer and smelling of cigar smoke .I was given a place at the same table which was already occupied by several people .I looked at the menu and there was Schweine this and Schweine that .The whole menu was pork and only pork .I asked the waitress for fish .There was nothing , but what was written on the menu .I ordered Pellkartoffel and a glass of milk The waitress looked at me , as if I was not right in the head ..

.After this festive fare ,I asked for the bill .She charged me ,as if I had ordered a whole meal .I asked her if I could pay her with American money , but she would only take D marks or local currency .All this .made it quite clear to me , that the Germans were even more greedy than the Jews.

Leaving the restaurant , I left no tip and the waitress came after me asking me with an outstretched hand for a tip " I have only American money "., I told her and left her standing ,with her mouth agape .

Slowly I walked in the dusk, through the Engestrassse to the Baustrasse No 7, the house of my childhood friend Jonny Janoschka, The Janoschka family was the only one, from the whole population during the time of the National Socialists .who stood by our side .My father and his ,were friends and spoke to each other in Polish .His two sisters , Marga and Heidi came many a time to my mother and exchanged recipes Jonny always played with us and had no Gentile friends and .neither him , nor his father were members of the Nazi Party .When all stores and businesses had placards with the inscription : " We do not serve Jews " in their shop windows , in their window the placard lay on its face .Marga and Heidi brought food for us , when all shops would ,or could not sell anything to the Jewish population . .

The bell on Jonny`s frontdoor was too high for me to reach ,so I tried the door and it was not locked. I opened the door and entered The smell of the hallway was musty and damp , the paint was peeling from the walls and the stairs were crooked and rickety. Gingerly , I went up the dark stairs minding my step, when I came to a door from which a light shone from



the bottom .On the landing was a toilet with a heartshaped hole in the door .I knocked on the door and the voice of a woman bade me to enter " Ja . kommen sie rein " I opened the door and an elderly woman was standing by the stove cooking a meal .There was a cast iron sink and above it a geyser for heating water " Entschuldigen sie, aber ist Ihr Mann zu Hause ? " (Excuse me Is your husband at home ) I asked .". Jonny , Jonny she called ,there is somebody to see you ". " Mensch , schon wieder jemand " ( Man , again someone ) I heard a gruffy voice " Nun , komm schon ! " A man dressed in shorts, stockings and slippers ,a full head of wavy grey hair and hornrimmed glasses, entered the kitchen.

He looked at me, his head bent forward , with a penetrating look and after only one short moment he exclaimed ":Ali , Ali mein Gott Ali .Ich kann es nicht glauben " ( I can't believe it ) It took this man less than a split second to recognise me after a seperation of more than fifty years He embraced me and than lifted me up .Both of us choked on our tears .He led me to a sofa in the livingroom and not letting go of my hand , we talked until the small hours of the morning . From time to time I got up, went to the window to gaze at our house It was as if I was looking at a spectre His wife Elly prepared some food and Jonny instructed her what to prepare, for he was acquainted with the Jewish dietary laws .He knew , what we were allowed to eat and what was forbidden to us .To my greatest surprise , he remembered in detail all the Jews living in the town and he told me so many details about my family , which I had never known .He told me how beautiful my mother was and what kind of a family we were .He complained bitterly about the communist regime and said : " The only decent people still left in the world are the Jews" ! His wife knew my sister and also my mother ..This was the first time in my life that I met somebody who had known my family and I could speak to, without the need to explain anything . My heart warmed toward them and I felt that I had come home at last !

They both accompanied me to my lodgings and we parted by embracing and kissing each other .making plans for the morrow .

I was quite unable to fall asleep , despite the very comfortable bed and the peaceful silence. I was very excited and my thoughts were passing like shadows before my eyes . . With open eyes I stared at the ceiling and I could not believe that I had reached the town , I so often had dreamed about .It seemed unreal, as though at any moment I would wake up .bathed in sweat like so many times before ..

The next morning ,.both Jonny and myself went to the Hafenstrasse, to the school I had attended as a boy .The same brown building made of bricks and mortar with a big crack reinforced by an iron plate. Pupils, boys and girls of all ages were walking and milling around the entrance of the building .With my heart beating ,we climbed the stairs and entered through the main portal .The office of the principal was situated on the first floor , and I showed Jonny the way The principal was a young man ,dressed in jeans a sportsjacket an open shirt and without a tie ..He received us with an amiable smile and offered us a seat.





.. My friend Jonny made the introduction ,explaining that I had been a pupil in this school and was an Israeli citizen wishing to tour it .In my mind I saw my mother as she remonstrated so many years ago with the moustached principal, telling him about the mistreatment of her youngest son , by the miscreant Krüger .I asked him to secure for me some names of pupils who were with me in the same class , but to my disappointment he told me that the lists with the names of all pupils in the thirties were stacked away in old and dusty vaults and that it would take an army to overcome this bureaucratic .modus operandi .

The young principal led us to the classroom I had last been in and I seated myself at the desk where limpy arsehold Krüger had taken me by the scruff of the neck and propelled me out of the class into the corridor Then we visited the Aula where all the pupils of the school were given lectures in racism and about the superiority of the Aryan race .After that ,he led us to the gymnasium where I had excelled in athletics .All the sport appliances were exactly the same as they were when I used to do gymnastics on them .The last place we went to, was the schoolyard , where all the pupils assembled on recess or on festivals .With a raised arm they took leave of school , singing the two national anthems " Deutschland, Deutschland über alles ,über alles in der Welt and the Horst Wessel song : " Die Fahne hoch , die Reihen fest geschlossen .S.A.marschiert im ruhig festen Schritt ..

Before we took leave of the obliging principal he gave us the name of a teacher ,who gave lessons in the English language and taught gymnastics His name was Harold Krüger, which made me wonder whether he might be a descendant of this infamous teacher of mine .,who had a terrible dislike for Jews and for garlic

We took my car and after only a few minutes we reached the school where Harold taught We saw a group of pupils being instructed in physical exercises On seeing us approaching , the teacher left his pupils and met us half way .Again I was introduced as having been a former Jewish inhabitant of this town .and having come from the Jewish State to visit the town of his birth It was indeed the Harold Krüger we were looking for and his handsome face lighted up with surprise .and his eyes opened with astonishment . He never had the privilege to meet a Jew or to meet an Israeli , that was like meeting a man from the moon .Suddenly Harold without much ado cited the Shema , the article of faith of the Jewish religion : " **Schema Jisrael Adonai Elohenu , Adonai Echad ( Hear O Israel the Lord is our God the Lord is One ! )**

.He annunciated it in perfect Hebrew .I was stunned on hearing the Schema in the bastion of communism , proclaimed by a German of the Christian faith ..Harold was an Israelophil ,an obsessive admirer of everything Jewish and Israeli . He travelled to faraway libraries to research subjects on Judaism Kabbalism and to find the meaning of life in the Talmud On his free days , he took his wife and two little children to..ancient Jewish cemeteries to look at the inscriptions on the headstones .I embraced him and a bond was forged between two persons from different religions and living in different worlds .He





asked for forgiveness for asking me to send him a book on Jewish festivals. A friendship, which has only been strengthened through his very lovely daughter Stephanie, who has corresponded with me throughout the following years. I never mentioned to him the event with his namesake.

That evening Harold visited me in my boarding house. He came on a bicycle which he put inside the hall and chained it to the banister. We talked for many hours and he parted with the promise to stay in contact and correspond..

On the second day I was able to enter our house. There were two tenants living in the house, both of them single mothers without husbands. The owners of the house was the city, who had collected the rent of our house for over fifty years. I walked through the house feeling numb, all color drained from my face. I felt a weakness in my knees and my chest contracted. I went through all rooms, my parent's bedroom, the room where Zilly slept and where we boys slept, the dining room where we ate on the Friday nights, the cellar, the loft and the yard where the toilet used to be. My God, why have you forsaken me, what happened, that we were so punished?

We visited the Ernst Barlach Museum and I admired his wonderful wood carvings, then we went to the Inselsee where we used to go on weekends and swim. The magnificent Domkirche with its high steeple and its famous bells were next on our agenda. There I made the acquaintance of Pastor Folker Hachtmann, a man of intelligence and with a sensitive soul, whose mission in life is to seek conciliation between the Christians, the German people and the Jews. He is a true Christian, practising his faith according to the principals of the New Testament. We are in contact with each other and are true friends.

If he had been a pastor during the period of the 3rd Reich, he would have opposed the persecution of the Jews, so it seems to me, he would have become a man like Pastor Niemöller..

Jonny took me to the site where the Synagogue used to stand, now an empty lot with lots of garbage and abandoned articles spread all over the site. Some vehicles were parked in uneven rows giving the impression that their owners did not know that here was once a building where people worshipped God. The annex buildings stood with all the windows boarded up, as if in mourning, like an aging woman living in seclusion, hiding her fading beauty. I looked at the doorstep of the building where Cantor Blumenfeld used to live, and I could not hide a smile, but this did not ease the pain I felt in my heart.

Then we drove to the cemetery and all the hundreds of graves were not there any longer. The authorities had preserved about a dozen gravestones without any bodies lying beneath them and had made a miniature Jewish cemetery. The dates on those stones were of about two centuries ago and the names were unfamiliar to me. Jonny pointed to a spot on the grass, where he believed the grave of my father to be. He and his father had been at my father's funeral. I said Kaddish (a prayer for the dead) and photographed the green spot.



A small supermarket had been built on the edge of the cemetery .and I went inside to purchase some food. I needed some milk and other milk products to pacify my rebellious stomach.The food I had eaten was alien to me and did not agree with me .There were very few products on the coarse wooden shelves and not much to choose from . I bought a bottle of milk ,some yogurt and a roll made of grey flour .I paid the cashier and waited for a bag to wrap my purchases in, when a bystander told me that the shop did not supply any wrapping material., I should have brought my own .He advised me to buy a newspaper to wrap in the food I had bought .

On the 4th, day of my stay ,we went to a motorcycle race , where a son of Jonny participated .I decided to take a nap ,as I had gotten very little sleep since my arrival to the town .I went to a little green lot close to the racingtrack , laid myself down and fell into a deep sleep Suddenly I was rudely woken , when somebody kicked me in my ribs. I opened my eyes , blinded by the sun and saw very faintly two policemen standing over me..

" Get up " one of them said to me in an authoritative voice .Outraged I told him that I was tired and did not feel like getting up .Both of them, without much ado , took me by my arms and lifted me up.,.One of them smelled my breath while the other demanded to see an I.D. I gave him my passport and he asked where I was from and I told him : " I am from Jerusalem .From where?.From Jerusalem, I repeated The policeman pulled out his handcuffs to arrest me , when Jonny arrived on the scene and told them who I was.With wonderment in their eyes they just stood there and neither of them uttered a single word` I pulled out my camera and took a photo of the two gaping German cops .

The next morning I went to the .cityhall and asked to be issued with a copy of my birth certificate .A woman official pulled out a file and gave me a certificate with the stamp of the D.D.R. and the serial number was 100. .

I took leave of Jonny and his wife Elly. We embraced and kissed each other and promised to stay in contact .The five days I spent with them , were days of remembrances of sorrow and sadness , bur I was impelled to do so , the fulfilment of a dream and a desire to close the circle I actually was there and I shall return , but it will be as a different person. .This was not a dream , I experienced reality .Then I stepped into my car and drove away glancing once more at our house and in the mirror I saw Jonny my childhood friend and his wife waving ,wishing me bon voyage and headed west toward the West German Republic . . . . Some two hours later I arrived at the border with very mixed feelings .Here I was in a country where my people had been persecuted and murdered and there I was fraternising and feeling at home with the language , with the people and with .the surroundings

Before crossing the border , I entered a restaurant , first and foremost to get rid of the East German money I still had .and may be find some souvenir A man joined me at my table , when the waitress asked me what I wanted to eat .I asked for a vegetarian fare ,but she had never heard of such food and than I asked for a cheese platter. When I looked





at the uninviting ,unattractive cheese , I pushed the plate away The person at my table said to me , that apparently the waitress had never come across a person who ate kosher food .I was surprised that he recognised me as being Jewish and he told me , that he was from Hamburg and had many Jewish friends .He was heading toward Mecklenburg to take a break from his wife , .

May I take the liberty to ask you for some advice ? he asked me . My mother is a dreadful embarrassment to me , whenever friends or visitors come to my home, she bursts into the room ,raises her arm and shouts : "Heil Hitler " That was all I needed .after my turbulent visit .to Güstrow . So I told him , " Shut your mother into another room " I tried that, he told me ,she knocks with her fists and her feet on the door, causing me even more mortification and distress The 5th commandment tells us to honor ones father and ones mother , " Make an appointment with a phsychyatrlist " .I advised him . All the money I had , I gave to the surprised and delighted waitress , sat myself into my car and drove over the border .I did not look back !

I grew up without parents and from an early age on , I had to fend for myself . People try to reach the heights of the Olympus but do not realise that this wish is unattainable .I always had dreams , but know the limits of what can be achieved .I am the only one of my family who is still alive .Everyone is no more .Have I been choosen to be the torchbearer of my family ? And if I have, for what? And why I ? .I cannot be asked to be like Job , who despite losing all his children and all his belongings, still kept his faith in God , believing and trusting him Survivors of the concentration camps believe in him despite their supreme suffering .I have a struggle and a contention with God .He has been unfair and unjust with me I have been punished sorely , and I must consult with myself and find a way to stay true to my convictions .

I cannot agree with what is written in Ecclesiastes:" Vanity of vanities vanity of vanities,all is vanity " All is not vanity Life is precious and one must only choose the right way to live and then it becomes priceless .Man is born innocent and given the choice to be good or bad, honest or dececeitful , compassionate or cruel and if he did have the " Free Choice " why blame God ? Yet God could have averted it all , but he did not lift a finger .

This is the first part of the saga of my family.. May God give me the health , the strength and the impotus needed , to write more, and find readers who will find.interest in my not **unusual** narrative ! .

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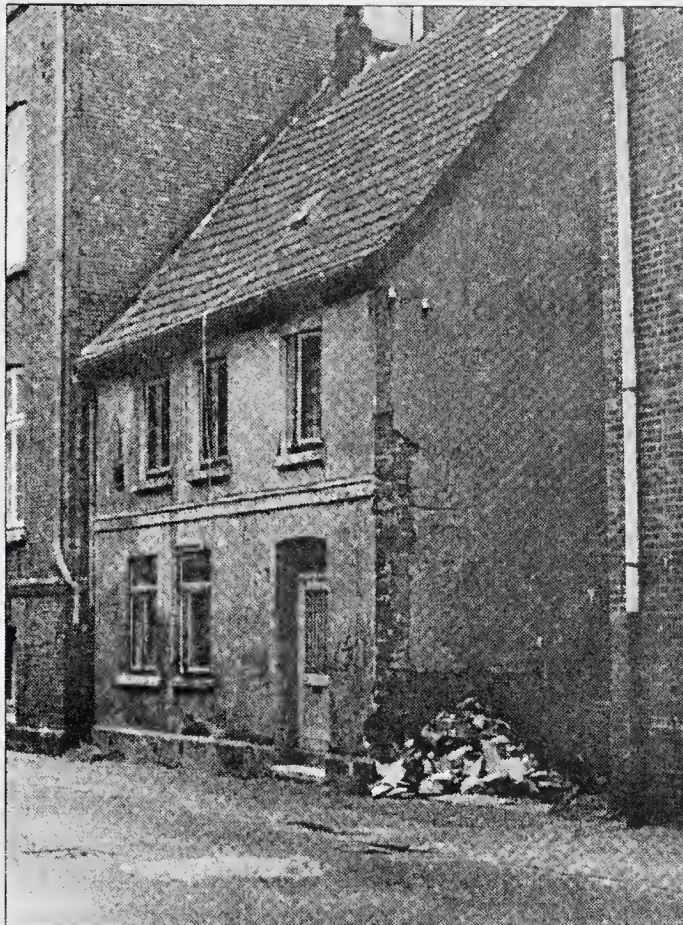


# Baustraße 34

Abraham Grossmann, 1925 in Güstrow geboren, berichtet über das Schicksal seiner jüdischen Familie in dieser Stadt von 1920 bis 1938. In lebhafter Weise beschreibt er die jüdische Lebensweise in der Familie, in der Synagoge und mit den Nachbarn in der Baustraße. Es ist die Beschreibung einer verlorenen Welt, die in den heimwehkranken Worten Ali Grossmanns aufersteht.

Sein Bericht kam durch die Vermittlung seines ehemaligen Mitschülers, Hans Peters vom Pferdemarkt 28 (Colonialwaren J. C. Peters), in die Hände der Herausgeberin.

Die Angaben zur Familiengeschichte Benjamin Grossmann stammen von Abraham Adolf (Ali) Grossmann, wohnhaft in der Chajim Laskow Straße 11, 2, Sharona Rechovot 76294, Israel. Ali wird am 21. März 1925 in Güstrow in der Kl. Schloßstraße 13 (heute Philipp-Brandin-Straße) geboren. Seine Eltern sind Benjamin Grossmann (1893-1936) und seine Ehefrau Nycha Grossmann, geb. Kramkimel (1895-1942), in 2. Ehe verheiratete Fliesswasser. Seine Geschwister sind Jakob (1920-1986), Bernhardt (1922-1989) und Schwester Zilli Regine (1928-1942). Ali besucht die Volksschule in der Hafenstraße in Güstrow von 1931 bis 1937. Sein Vater Benjamin betreibt ein Schuh- und Textilgeschäft in der Baustraße 34 unter dem Namen »Zum billigen Bernhardt«. Der Vertrieb von Schaftstiefeln ist seine Spezialität. Die Verfolgung durch die Nationalsozialisten gefährdet auch die Existenz der jüdischen Familie Grossmann. Benjamin Grossmann stirbt 1936. Seine Frau Nycha heiratet 1938 den Kaufmann Hermann Fliesswasser aus Stralsund und flieht nach der »Reichskristallnacht« im November 1938 aus Güstrow nach Brüssel in Belgien. Von dort wird die Fa-



Baustraße 34 1998, abgerissen 2000. Heute befinden sich dort Behindertenparkplätze für das Technische Rathaus, Baustraße 33



Benjamin Grossmann, ca. 1920



Nycha Kramkimel mit Vater und Geschwistern, ca. 1912



milie Fliesswasser, darunter auch Zilli Grossmann, am 26. September 1942 nach Auschwitz transportiert und kommt dort in den Gaskammern um. Die drei Brüder Grossmann kommen mit einem Kindertransport nach England. Jakob und Bernhardt arbeiten als Landarbeiter, Ali wohnt in einem Heim und besucht eine Schule. Ab 1942 lernt er Schlosser auf einer Technischen Schule. 1944/45 meldet Ali sich freiwillig zur britischen Armee und dient in Italien, Belgien und Bielefeld, Westfalen. Später dient er in der Jüdischen Brigade in Europa. 1947 wird er von dort entlassen und kehrt nach England zurück. Er heiratet Genia Zughaft aus Berlin, deren Eltern auch von den Nationalsozialisten ermordet wurden und die ebenfalls mit einem Kindertransport nach England gelangt ist. Sie haben zwei Söhne. 1948 wandert die Familie nach Palästina aus. Ali nimmt als Offizier am Befreiungskrieg und allen weiteren israelischen Kriegen teil. Zehn Jahre lebt Familie Grossmann in einem Kibutz in Galiläa, das Ali mitbegründet. 1958 übersiedelt sie in eine kleine Stadt im Süden Israels, wo Ali als selbständiger Wasserinstallateur an Neubauten arbeitet. 1975 stirbt seine Frau Genia. 1978 heiratet er Victoria Kadori, mit der er 1981 nach San Francisco,

Ali Grossmann und seine 2. Frau Vicky, ca. 2000









# COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SERVICE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES

Arolsen (Waldeck) Allemagne

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

Arolsen (Waldeck) Germany

INTERNATIONALER SUCHDIENST

Arolsen (Waldeck) Deutschland

Certificate of Incarceration

Inhaftierungsbescheinigung

Certificat d'incarcération

Ihr Akt.-Z.: Reg. Pr. Hildesheim

Votre Réf.: Nr. 223 811 a-c

Your Ref.: (Antr. d. H. Landes, Berlin)

Unser Akt.-Z.:

Notre Réf.:

Our Ref.:

T/D 655 983

Name: FLIESSWASSER, verw. KIMEL  
Nom: GROSSMANN, geb. KRAM  
Name: KIMEL  
Geburtsdatum: im Jahre 1900  
Date de naissance: im Jahre 1900  
Date of birth: im Jahre 1900  
Geburtsort: Warschau  
Lieu de naissance: Warschau  
Place of birth: Warschau  
Staatsangehörigkeit: nicht angegeben  
Nationalité: nicht angegeben  
Nationality: nicht angegeben  
Häftlingsnummer: nicht angegeben  
No. de prisonnier: nicht angegeben  
Prisoner's No.: nicht angegeben  
Namen der Eltern: nicht angegeben  
Noms des parents: nicht angegeben  
Parents' names: nicht angegeben

It is hereby certified that the following information is available in documentary evidence held by the International Tracing Service.

Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in den Unterlagen des Internationalen Suchdienstes aufgeführt sind.

Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la documentation détenue par le Service International de Recherches.

Name: FLIESSWASSER, geb. KRAMKINAL  
Nom: geb. KRAMKINAL  
Name: geb. KRAMKINAL  
Geburtsdatum: 18.11.1895  
Date de naissance: 18.11.1895  
Date of birth: 18.11.1895  
Geburtsort: Varsovie  
Lieu de naissance: Varsovie  
Place of birth: Varsovie  
Staatsangehörigkeit: nicht angeführt  
Nationalité: nicht angeführt  
Nationality: nicht angeführt  
Beruf: Hausfrau  
Profession: Hausfrau  
Profession: Hausfrau  
Namen der Eltern: nicht angeführt  
Noms des parents: nicht angeführt  
Parents' names: nicht angeführt

Zuletzt bekannter ständiger Wohnsitz: nicht angeführt  
Dernière adresse connue: nicht angeführt  
Last permanent residence: nicht angeführt

wurde eingeliefert in das Konzentrationslager: Sammellager Malines  
est entré au camp de concentration: Sammellager Malines  
has entered concentration camp: Sammellager Malines  
Häftlingsnummer: nicht angeführt  
No. de prisonnier: nicht angeführt  
Prisoner's No.: nicht angeführt

am: nicht angeführt  
le: nicht angeführt  
on: nicht angeführt  
von: nicht angeführt  
venant de: nicht angeführt  
coming from: nicht angeführt

Kategorie, oder Grund für die Inhaftierung: "Jüdin"  
Catégorie, ou raison donnée pour l'incarcération: "Jüdin"  
Category, or reason given for incarceration: "Jüdin"

Überstellt am: 26. September 1942 mit Transport Nr. XI/1118 zum KL. Auschwitz.  
Transféré: 26. September 1942 mit Transport Nr. XI/1118 zum KL. Auschwitz.  
Transferred: 26. September 1942 mit Transport Nr. XI/1118 zum KL. Auschwitz.

Befreit/Entlassen am: nicht angeführt  
Libéré/Relâché le: nicht angeführt  
Liberated/Released on: nicht angeführt  
In: nicht angeführt  
in: nicht angeführt

Bemerkungen: Varsovie = Warschau.  
Remarques: Varsovie = Warschau.  
Remarks: Varsovie = Warschau.

Abweichungen: Mädchenname, Geburtsdatum.  
Ein Todesnachweis liegt nicht vor. Wir sind daher nicht in der Lage, die Ausstellung einer Sterbeurkunde zu veranlassen.

Geprüfte Unterlagen: Transportlisten des Sammellagers Malines.  
Documents consultés: Transportlisten des Sammellagers Malines.  
Records consulted: Transportlisten des Sammellagers Malines.

Arolsen, den 6. März 1958

A. DE COCATRIX

Directeur adjoint

Service International de Recherches

A. OPITZ

Section des Archives

Der ITS übernimmt für die Richtigkeit und Vollständigkeit des Inhalts der Dokumente, die zur Ausstellung dieser Bescheinigung verwendet wurden, keine Gewähr.

Erklärung des I.S.D., erscheint nicht in den Originalunterlagen.  
Explication fournie par le S.I.R. n'est pas sur les documents originaux.







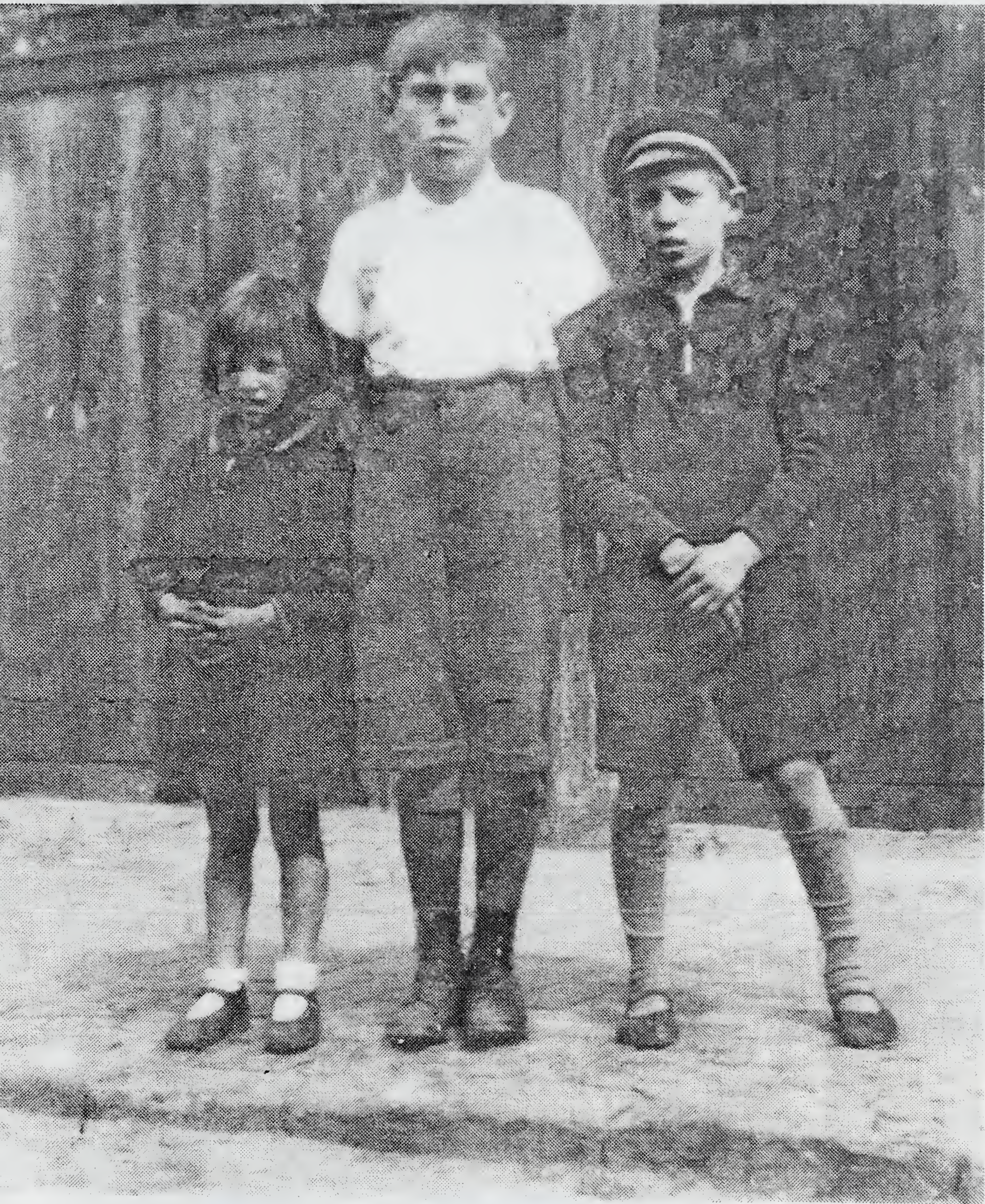
my SISTER 21661











ZILLI

3 BRUNHARDT

201







THE CHILDREN OF  
GUSTAV IN FRONT  
OF SYMBOGUE  
CA. 1931







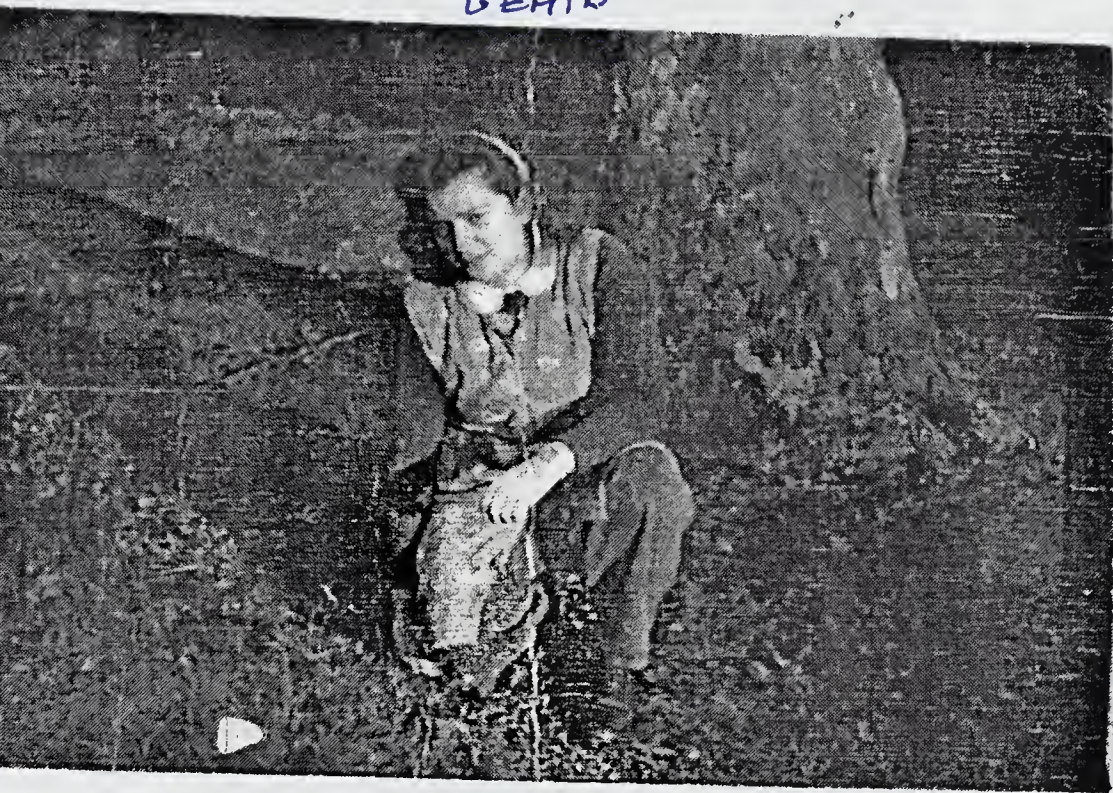




GENIA



BEN HAROT - ALI



GENIA



ALI - GENIA



JEWISH CEMETARY  
GÜSTROW









ՃԱԿՈՅ

ԽՆ

1941



ՃԱԿՈՅ ԻՄՈՏԻՆԵՆ

1935



ԱՆ 2003,









# Nycha Kramkimmel mit Mutter und Geschwistern, ca. 1912

my mother - FATIMEN  
O. SIBLINGS









ALI

GENA MY FATHER









DEI WITH BENI

ca. 1952

1st KIBUTZ

LAU!







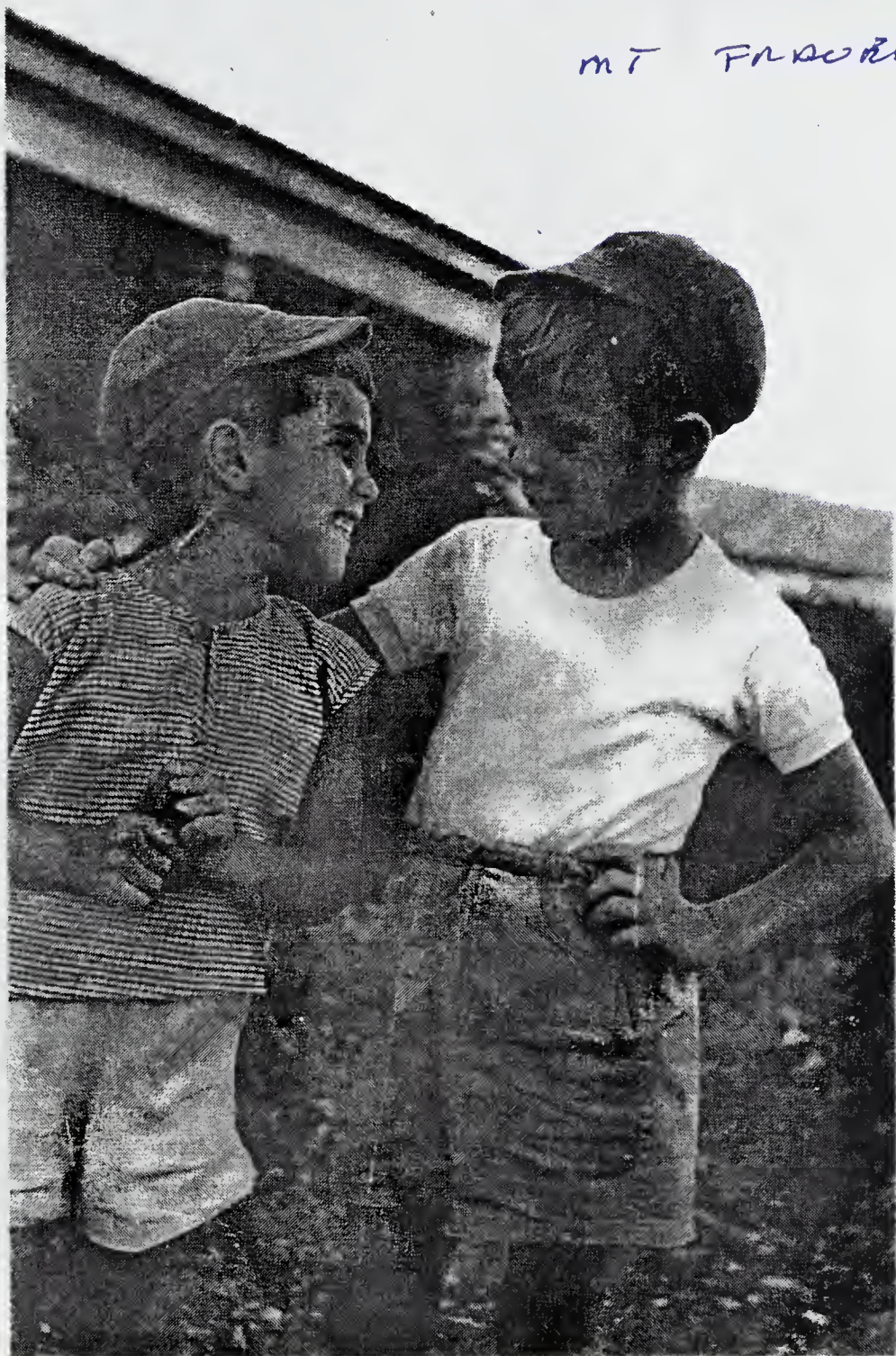




UM

BEM

MIT FRAUEN U. KINDER



my sons

UM - BEM







ing support, but the popular feeling against the Army continued, and no doubt a reason for the courts-martial of leading officers afterward. Meanwhile, Nasser was telling his allies in Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo that the Israelis were being defeated and that his Shazli mission was even then approaching the

Israeli-Jordanian frontier. It was this optimistic assessment that persuaded King Hussein, despite his misgivings, to throw his forces whole-heartedly into battle.

It has been suggested that Mossad (the Israeli secret intelligence organization) had a hand in this. Having broken Egyptian cyphers, it is said, the Israelis caught

Egyptian radio messages, changed them to convey a highly optimistic report of Egyptian successes, and then retransmitted them to their original destinations. No solid evidence has been produced for these claims, and the banal explanation, that Amer and his officers were unwilling to report bad news, or at least delayed sending it in the hope that it might be overtaken by better tidings, seems much more plausible. Whatever the explanation, throughout this war Nasser seems to have been unaware at each stage of how bad the situation was. It was not until late afternoon on the first day, for example, that he realized that for most practical purposes his air force had ceased to exist. A few days later, aware that the situation was grim but unaware of its catastrophic grimness, he delayed agreement to a ceasefire in the hope of improving his position by a last-minute success.

On 6 June Gaza was captured by an Israeli reserve infantry brigade against stiff and prolonged resistance; most of the remainder of the Gaza Strip had been overrun earlier the same day, with infantry and paratroops combining to capture the hill dominating Gaza town. On 7 June, with Israeli Air Force ground-attack operations getting into full swing, Tal's men pushed westward, with one arm assisting Yoffe's men to capture the supply base of Bir Gafgafa and one brigade pushing toward the northern end of the Suez Canal. It was in defense of Bir Gafgafa that the Egyptians launched their last substantial counterattack by tanks; this was defeated. Yoffe's force moved on toward the Mitla and Gidi passes, through which

LEFT: A captured Egyptian soldier is helped aboard the boat returning him home.  
BOTTOM LEFT: Israeli troops in Gaza.  
BELOW: The Egyptian governor of Gaza, Gen Abdul Hussaini, is led into captivity.











VICKY

DLI



DLI









DOLCE VITA

Snoopy

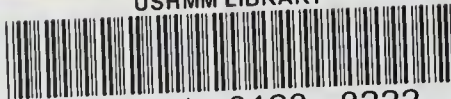








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